

Message Text

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60

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ADP-00 VO-03 CIAE-00 FBIE-00 INSE-00

NSAE-00 L-03 SCA-01 INR-10 RSR-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 PA-03

USIA-12 H-02 NSC-10 /081 W

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R 092139Z JUL 73

FM USMISSION USUN NY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8701

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 2511

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS, UN, CU

SUBJ: VISA FOR CUBAN JOURNALIST: FELIX PITA ASTUDILLO

REFS: STATE 131197

USUN 2225

1. UN CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION (UNCA) SOURCE JUST INFORMED US THAT FORMAL INVITATION HAS BEEN SENT TO FELIX PITA ASTUDILLO. SINCE NOMINATION ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY CUBAN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION (ASOCIACION DE PERIDISTAS DE CUBA) WE EXPECT THAT PITA WILL ACCEPT FELLOWSHIP AND THAT UNCA WILL SOON APPROACH US TO FACILITATE ISSUANCE VISA.

2. WE ASSUME THAT PITA IS MEMBER CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND THEREFORE INELIGIBLE FOR VISA. WE RECOMMEND CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF PITFALLS OF REFUSAL IN THIS CASE. REFUSAL OF VISA TO DAG HAMMERSKJOLD FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT COULD WELL PLACE US IN CONFRONTATION SITUATION WITH UNCA, WHICH GENERALLY COOPERATES WITH USG ON BASIC FREEDOM OF PRESS ISSUES. IN PITA'S CASE, UNCA LEADERSHIP WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY CHARGE THAT DENIAL OF VISA IS VIOLATION OF SPIRIT OF HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT AND WOULD INSIST THAT SYG AND UN LEGAL COUNSEL SUPPORT THEIR CONTENTION. ARGUMENT WOULD SURELY RUN THAT WHETHER OR NOT US TECHNICALLY BOUND TO GRANT VISA (AND WE WOULD NOT BE UNLESS EFFORT MADE ACCREDIT PITA AS BONA FIDE CORRESPONDENT),

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DENIAL OF VISA RESULTED FROM LOCATION OF UN IN US, THUS CON-

TRADICTING SUPPOSEDLY GLOBAL NATURE OF THE UN. WE CAN ENVISAGE UPROAR SIMILAR TO THAT PROVOKED BY ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE TREASURY LICENSE RESTRICTIONS ON OPERATIONS OF PRENSA LATINA'S UN BUREAU IN FALL OF 1969 (USUN 4294 OF NOVEMBER 24, 1969, AND A-18 OF JANUARY 7, 1970). ISSUE MIGHT ALSO STIMULATE FURTHER THOSE UN DELEGATES CONSTANTLY SEEKING ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THEIR CONTENTION THAT UN SHOULD BE MOVED FROM NEW YORK BECAUSE OF "US LACK OF HOSPITALITY".

3. WE DOUBT THAT DENIAL OF VISA IN THIS CASE COULD BE KEPT AN IN-HOUSE UN MATTER. UNCA MEMBERS ARE OBVIOUSLY IN IDEAL SITUATION TO GIVE MAXIMUM PUBLICITY TO THE CASE. WE WOULD BE SUBJECT TO SERIES OF ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS IN US NEWSPAPERS ON EVE OF UNGA OPENING, CRITICIZING VISA REGULATIONS AND REVIVING CALL FOR CHANGE IN US POLICY TOWARDS CUBA. CUBANS, OF COURSE, WOULD BE IN AN IDEAL SITUATION--THEY COULD SIT BACK AND MERELY GARNER FAVORABLE PUBLICITY WHICH WOULD BE BY-PRODUCT OF SHOWDOWN BETWEEN USG AND UNCA.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT WAIVER CAN BE FULLY JUSTIFIED BY VIEWING THIS CASE AS UNIQUE ONE IN MULTILATERAL UN CONTEXT WHICH DOES NOT AFFECT OUR BASIC POLICY ON CUBA.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND GRANTING OF VISA WAIVER.
BENNETT

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